



# F-35 Lightning II Program

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## 2ND MAW TO REVOLUTIONIZE MARINE AVIATION WITH F-35B

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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. - In keeping with its highest traditions, Marine Corps aviation has been and will continue to expand throughout the next year.

In order to continue to be the nation's expeditionary force in readiness, the Marine Corps has introduced the F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter as the newest aircraft intended to hit the fleet, and contribute to the expansion of the Corps' arsenal of aircraft.

The single engine, single seat, short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft will replace older F/A-18 Hornets, AV-8B Harriers and EA-6B Prowlers, allowing close air support in hazardous conditions and locations that more traditional aircraft would not be able to access. The new aircraft will also be used to assist the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

To provide close air support, the F-35B can operate from amphibious warships. In October, the Corps' test fighter BF-2 performed the first successful at-sea vertical landing when it landed on the flight deck of the USS Wasp as part of initial ship trials of the aircraft.

"The first at-sea vertical landing is a huge milestone," said Roger Cordell, military site director for F-35 test and evaluation at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md.

The F-35B has performed more than 250 vertical landings this year, 72 of which happened aboard the USS Wasp.

"The Marine Corps has to be ready to fight across the spectrum of war; a force that is most ready when the nation is least ready," said Maj. Gen. John M. Davis, commanding general of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. "The F-35B gives us the capability to do just that."

Second MAW is expected to receive its first F-35B in early January at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., where the Marine Corps stood up Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 501. The Warlords are the Marine Corps' first Joint Strike Fighter squadron.

"The arrival of the F-35B at the Marine Corps' first F-35 squadron, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501, is truly a monumental event for the Corps and our nation," said Davis.